

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-6. (canceled)

7. (previously presented) A distributed platform for co-ordinating user access to information provided by content service providers, the platform comprising:

- (a) a user interface;
- (b) a first advertising board for advertising services of information brokers;
- (c) a first searching agent for searching the first advertising board for services based on a request from the user;
- (d) a second advertising board for advertising the services of at least two separate information content suppliers;
- (e) a second searching agent for searching the second advertising board for available services based on results of the search of the first advertising board and the request from the user, and
- (f) means for providing the results of the search of the second advertising board from the second advertising board to the first advertising board,

and transferring the results from the first advertising board to the user interface through the first searching agent.

8. (previously presented) A distributed platform as in claim 7, wherein the first and second advertising boards are distributed.

9. (currently amended) A distributed platform as in claim 7, wherein a plurality of first and second advertising boards are provided each of which advertises the services available in a particular market, each of the first advertising boards being searchable by the first searching agent based on the request from the user.

10. (previously presented) A distributed platform as in claim 7, wherein means are provided for interrogating the user to determine specific preferences.

11. (previously presented) A distributed platform as in claim 10, wherein the specific preferences comprise where and/or how and/or when the information found by the second searching agent, is to be communicated to the user.

12. (previously presented) A distributed platform as in claim 7, wherein a banking agent is provided for monitoring all financial transactions that take place as a result of the request from the user, between the information brokers and the at least two separate information content suppliers.

13. (previously presented) A distributed platform as in claim 12, wherein each user has an account that is monitored by the banking agent and is updated as soon as response to a request for information is accepted for delivery to the user.

14. (previously presented) A distributed platform as in claim 7, wherein a marketing agent is provided for setting up the first and second advertising boards and subsequent boards introduced onto the platform.

15. (previously presented) A distributed platform as in claim 14, wherein the marketing agent arranges the boards according to the type of services being marketed thereon.

16. (canceled)

17. (previously presented) A distributed platform for co-ordinating user access to information provided by content service providers, the platform comprising:

- (a) a user interface for receiving a request from a user;
- (b) a content service provider advertising board for advertising services of at least two separate content service providers;
- (c) a first searching agent for searching the content service provider advertising board for services, based on the request from the user;
- (d) means for providing the results of the search of the content service provider advertising board to the user;
- (e) a broker advertising board for advertising the services of brokers that act as intermediaries between the content service providers and the user; and
- (f) a second searching agent for searching the broker advertising board for available services based on the request from the user,
wherein the second searching agent identifies a suitable broker based on the request from the user, and the first searching agent is associated with that identified broker so that the first searching agent searches the content service provider advertising board for services based on the identified broker as well as the request from the user.

18.-26. (canceled)

27. (previously presented) A distributed platform as in claim 12 in which the first searching agent monitors the user interface for an acceptance message which is transferred to the information content supplier selected from the second advertising board by way of the information broker selected from the first advertising board.

28. (previously presented) A distributed platform as in claim 27 in which the selected information content supplier forwards transaction details to the banking agent, said details identifying the information broker and the information broker forwards additional transaction details to the banking agent to cause a billing agent to bill the requesting user.

29. (previously presented) A distributed platform as in claim 27 in which the content supplier causes launch of an execution agent to effect delivery of the selected service to the requesting user.

30. (previously presented) A distributed platform for processing a user request for information, the platform comprising:

- (a) a user interface for receiving a user request for information;
- (b) a service agent board for advertising services of a plurality of service agents;
- (c) a customer agent for searching the service agent board and selecting

at least one of service agent from the plurality of service agents based on the received user request; and

(d) a customer provider agent board for advertising the services of at least two separate information content providers; wherein the at least one selected service agent searches for and selects at least one information content provider from the customer provider agent board, and the at least one selected information content provider provides information based on the received user request to the at least one selected service agent which in turn provides the information to the customer agent.

31. (previously presented) A distributed platform for co-ordinating user access to information provided by content service providers, the platform comprising:

(a) a user interface for receiving a request from a user;

(b) a first advertising board for advertising services of information brokers;

(c) a first searching agent for searching the first advertising board and selecting a particular information broker based on the request from the user;

(d) a second advertising board for advertising the services of at least two separate information content suppliers; and

(e) a second searching agent for searching the second advertising board based on the request from the user, the second searching agent being selected by

the selected information broker;

wherein the results of the search of the second advertising board are provided from the second searching agent to the first searching agent, and then transferred from the first searching agent to the user interface.

32. (new) A distributed platform as in claim 30, wherein the service agent board and the customer provider agent board are distributed.

33. (new) A distributed platform as in claim 30, further comprising a plurality of service agent boards and customer provider agent boards, wherein the service agent boards are searchable by the customer agent based on the request received by the user interface.

34. (new) A distributed platform as in claim 31, wherein the first and second advertising boards are distributed.

35. (new) A distributed platform as in claim 31, wherein a plurality of first and second advertising boards are provided, each of the first advertising boards being searchable by the first searching agent based on the request from the user.